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Mrs Postlethwaite











A
PUZZLE
FOR
A CURIOUS GIRL.



Trifles light as air
Are, to the *curious*, confirmations strong
As proofs of holy writ. SHAKSPEARE.



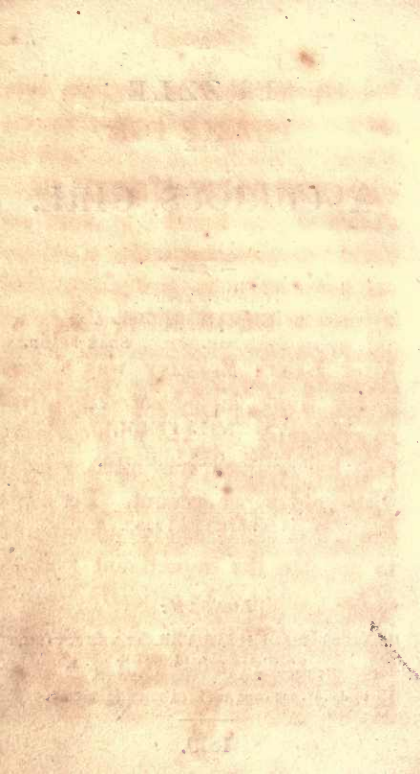
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PUZZLE FOR

A CURIOUS GIRL, &c.

CURIOSITY.

MISS LAURA BELFAST was a very pretty, frank, kind-hearted girl, but so grievously afflicted with curiosity that her mamma was often greatly distressed on her account. For some time, that amiable lady endeavoured to appease the impertinent feelings of her daughter, by patiently answering all her questions; she then tried the effect of persuasion, but with no better success: so that, in the end, she

was obliged to communicate her sorrow to Mr. Belfast, and to beg his advice.

Mr. Belfast was a judicious, sensible man, and heard of his child's weakness with much concern ; being well aware that curiosity when indulged is apt to become a passion destructive to all the happiness of life. Regret however could be of no avail ; and therefore, having listened to what his lady had done to correct the infirmity of Laura, he advised her to resist it firmly for the future, until the unfortunate miss felt the effects of her own folly.

Accordingly, that morning Mrs. Belfast, having ordered the carriage for an airing, took Laura with her ; and, as they were driving out of

Kensington, the place of their residence, she said, as they were passing a lane, "Oh! I had intended to stop; do, my dear, pull the check-string, we shall have gone too far." Laura pulled the string and let down the glass.

"I meant to have stopped at the top of the lane which we have just passed," said Mrs. Belfast to her coachman; "but it is of no consequence, you need not turn back, I will alight here."

The moment the coach-door was opened, Laura was jumping out. "You may wait for me," said Mrs. Belfast; "I shall not be gone five minutes." "Pray, mamma, let me go with you," said Laura. "No, my dear, it does not suit me," answered her mother. "Now do,

pray, let me ; I wish it so very much." Mrs. Belfast, however, without staying to hear her finish her entreaty, desired the footman to shut the door.

"What can be mamma's objection," said Laura to herself, "to my going with her ? I am sure there can be no reason against it. She said she should not be gone five minutes. How provoking it is !

Five minutes, ten minutes, elapsed, and no Mrs. Belfast returned. "Where can my mamma be gone !" exclaimed Laura. "I am sure I wish I had jumped out : she would then, perhaps, have taken me with her." Her curiosity now passed all bounds. "Did you see which way my mamma went, Thomas ?" said she to the

footman, who was walking backwards and forwards by the side of the coach. "No, miss ; how should I?" replied the man. "Oh, I wish I knew," said she.

Half an hour passed, which to Laura's impatience, appeared double the time. "Open the door, if you please, Thomas," said she ; "I must go and see after my mamma."

The moment she had alighted, Mrs. Belfast appeared in sight : Laura skipped back into the coach. "Where were you going, my dear?" said Mrs. Belfast, as soon as they were seated. "I—I—I began to be uneasy," replied her daughter, blushing.

"Thank you, Laura, for your anxiety on my account," said Mrs.

Belfast, looking earnestly at her ; “ I was detained longer than I had expected.”

“ Mamma,” said Laura, trying to assume a smile, after a few moments’ silence, “ where have you been such a long time ?”

“ Laura,” replied Mrs. Belfast, “ I see plainly what will be the case ; as usual, you will make yourself unhappy for the day, because there is a trifling circumstance with which I have not acquainted you. Do, my dear, take my advice in time, and try to suppress your insatiable curiosity.”

“ Yes ; but you will tell me, will you not, where you have been ?”

“ Is this a proof, Laura, you are following my advice ?”

“But I do wish so very much to know. Oh, mamma, if you would but answer me this one question, I would never be curious again.”

“If I do, you will not be more satisfied; for it will introduce another, which I certainly shall not answer.”

“Only tell me that, mamma, and I will not ask you any thing further. Did you call any where?”

“Yes.”

“At Mrs. Green’s?”—“No.”

“Upon Miss Harris?”—“No.”

“Upon any poor person?”

“Poor in comparison to some, and rich in comparison to others; not a person in absolute indigence.”

“Did you see any body that I know?”